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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

The President announced today that he has renewed Most-Favored-Nation trade status for China this year. Last year, the President delinked China's MFN trade status from overall human rights considerations. He did so because he concluded that broad engagement with China, including on human rights issues, offers the best prospect for progress in all areas of concern to us.

Under the criteria set forth in the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, and in particular, the Jackson-Vanik amendment concerning freedom of emigration, the sole statutory requirement for MFN renewal is a Presidential determination that renewal will substantially promote freedom of emigration in China. The President will today transmit to Congress a determination to this effect. China continues to allow free emigration and open travel overseas, including travel for students.

Although we are renewing MFN, we find China's record on human rights unacceptable. China continues to deny its citizens freedom of speech, association and religion and fails to guarantee humane treatment of prisoners. Extrajudicial arrest and detention remain common practices.

We maintain a vigorous approach to human rights issues in China, including raising these issues directly with the Chinese government, pressing for attention to China's human rights practices in multilateral institutions, expanding international broadcasting, working with American non-government organizations and developing voluntary business principles for use by the private sector. This mix of policies is aimed at keeping the spotlight on their deficiencies and seeking progress in both the short and the long term.

We believe that renewal of MFN will promote a range of U.S. interests in China, including human rights. We remain convinced that the broadest possible engagement with China offers the best opportunity over the long term to ensure that China abides by internationally-accepted norms. MFN status for China will enable us to continue to engage China in the comprehensive and constructive manner necessary to move forward on the full range of bilateral, regional and global issues.

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